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intent upon inciting the peasants to murder and pillage.⁸ This doctrine—by no means new—naturally rouses the republican ardor of those interested in the enterprise we have under consideration. Brette regards the cahiers as a sort of moral inventory of France at the close of the Ancien Régime and holds that by revealing the terrible disorder they constitute the most striking justification of the Revolution.⁹ The fairest and most comprehensive review of the whole matter is perhaps that of Sagnac.¹⁰ Allowing for all exaggerations of style he believes that the more carefully the cahiers are studied and compared with other sources of information the more does one's respect for them grow. Wahl, it may be remarked, based his conclusions on the few local cahiers included in the *Archives Parlementaires*. Boissonnade emerging from long intimate contact with the cahiers themselves says, "Si le bourgeois, le légiste, le lettré, ont tenu la plume, c'est l'artisan, c'est le paysan qui ont presque toujours dicté." As he ran through the cahiers, "au spectacle de leurs incorrections naïves, de leur gaucherie, de leur pittoresque orthographe, il n'est guère possible", he concludes, "de soutenir qu'ils ne sont pas, pour la majeure part, l'œuvre réelle des assemblées populaires, qu'ils n'expriment pas à la fois les griefs particuliers de la bourgeoisie en même temps que ceux du peuple des villes et des campagnes."¹¹

Modern England: a Record of Opinion and Action from the Time of the French Revolution to the Present Day. In two volumes. By ALFRED WILLIAM BENN. (London: Watts and Company. 1908. Pp. xvi, 250; x, 251-519.)

It was by no means a slight task that Mr. Benn undertook when he began to write the history of opinion and action in England in the 118 years between 1789 and 1907. During the years while he was engaged on his *Modern England*, his work was complicated and made more difficult by the appearance of volume after volume of memoirs and biography, and of such able reviews of recent English history as that of Sir Spencer Walpole in his *History of Twenty-five Years* and that of Messrs. Low and Sanders in the twelfth volume of the *Political History of England*. Could Mr. Benn have recommenced his work after the publication of the biographies of Graham and Durham, Lytton and Lord Randolph Churchill, of the queen's *Letters* and Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, it is conceivable that he would very considerably have modified some

⁸ *Die Notabelnversammlung von 1787* (1899), and *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Französischen Revolution* (1901).

⁹ *La Révolution Française*, XLVII. 6.

¹⁰ "Les Cahiers de 1789 et leur Valeur" in *La Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, vol. VIII. (1906-1907), pp. 329ff. Onou ("La Valeur des Cahiers de 1789", in *La Révolution Française*, vol. XLIX. (1905), pp. 385ff.) agrees with Sagnac that the cahiers are highly subjective and that the peasants' statistics where they cannot be controlled must be taken with caution.

¹¹ *Cahiers de Doléances de la Sénéchaussée d'Angoulême*, pp. 8, 12.

of the judgments he has passed on the actors in the English political field during the middle years of the nineteenth century. As it is, in the light of all these recent publications, much of his work strikes the reader as shallow, and lacking in accuracy and historical thoroughness; while his judgments do not seem to be sufficiently well-founded to command acquiescence or respect.

Mr. Benn writes openly from the rationalistic point of view of the seventies and eighties of the last century, and his bias against the churches must be taken into account. His aim is to give in short compass not a history of events or of political and social developments; but a record of opinion as illustrated in action—to unfold the history of the century from within, as due to human feeling, human reason and human will, rather than as a succession of more or less closely related happenings. It is only by a rigid narrowing of scope that Mr. Benn could have succeeded in compressing the story into 500 pages, and the effort to be brief has brought it about that Mr. Benn states many of his conclusions as *obiter dicta*, unsupported by sufficient information to enable the reader to judge of their accuracy.

To some extent Mr. Benn's book resembles Professor A. V. Dicey's *Law and Public Opinion in England*. Like Professor Dicey Mr. Benn brings out the influence of Bentham, Mill and Malthus in moulding the laws and institutions of Great Britain. He is concerned, however, with much more diverse developments than Professor Dicey. He follows many currents of opinion beside what may be called the main philosophical trend of the age. He tries to give a summary of the religious, political and scientific thought of the nineteenth century, with its effect on education, literature, legislation, and domestic and foreign policy. While it is impossible to expect from any man whose life has been contemporaneous with more than half of the period he reviews an absolutely unbiassed judgment, or a correct understanding of all the forms of thought and opinion that he sets out to describe, it must be conceded that Mr. Benn's work is both useful and valuable. He has woven together in a continuous story the inner life of England during the nineteenth century, and while his book as a history of the period cannot be compared for fullness or accuracy with such works as Sir Spencer Walpole's history or the last two volumes of the *Political History of England* or with special treatises on aspects of the subject such as Professor Dicey's *Law and Opinion in England*, Sir Leslie Stephen's *Utilitarians*, or Mr. G. R. Balleine's *History of the Evangelical Party*, it is an advantage to have gathered up in short space the many and varied lines of thought that underlay the vast expansion and development of the years between the Fall of the Bastille and the incoming of the present Liberal government in England. As is perhaps natural in such a work, the latter part is of least value. The record of the last twenty years, as presented by Mr. Benn, is bald and jejune, and to a younger generation it would seem that Mr. Benn scarcely does justice

to modern ideas and opinions. There is no bibliography, authorities being quoted only somewhat sparingly in foot-notes. While a freer use of the memoirs and letters which have recently appeared would probably have modified some of Mr. Benn's opinions, for example his admiration of Lord Palmerston, it would also have prevented him from continuing some old errors, such as the assertion that Charles Buller wrote the report of the Earl of Durham on Canada.

Modern Egypt. By the Earl of CROMER. In two volumes. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1908. Pp. xviii, 594; xiv, 600.)

Books written by men who have played a great part in the world, recording what they have themselves seen and done, are so valuable a source for the historian that this REVIEW is glad to welcome another. The important ones that belong to this class are few. The *Commentaries* of Julius Caesar and those of the Emperor Baber are the most familiar instances. There are also, however, works in which some eminent person, generally at the close of his career, explains and justifies his policy. This was done by Napoleon Bonaparte indirectly and by Bismarck directly. A third class includes histories of their own time composed by men who have more or less influenced the events they describe. Under this head we may put the treatises of Thucydides, Procopius, Otto of Freysing, Philip of Commines, John Knox, Clarendon, Burnet. Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt* stands partly in one, partly in another, of these latter classes. Although to some extent a narrative of what the author did himself, it has also a wider scope, and covers the politics and administration of the Nile valley generally during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For dealing with this theme, Lord Cromer had several conspicuous advantages. One is that of a thorough and exact knowledge. He took part in most of the important decisions of policy here recorded, and knows the grounds of them. He is himself a source as well as a historian.

It is a second advantage that the subject has a unity and simplicity which corresponds to the country. Egypt is of all the lands in the Eastern Hemisphere that which is most detached from other lands, least affected by what happens on its borders. In this narrative the influences of three foreign powers are of course constantly felt. But though Turkey (or rather the Sultan of Turkey), England and France are constant factors, their action can be described without much reference to the general politics of Europe and still less reference to the internal politics of those three countries. And, thirdly, Egypt is a land whose fortunes are of perpetual interest to all educated men. No country has had so long a history. Its records begin almost twice as far behind us as do the records of Greece or Rome. They set before us fortunes strangely varying from century to century; and it is a